

Hampton Roads Military Affairs Commission

March 9, 2010

The Honorable Raymond E. Mabus, Jr.
Secretary of the U.S. Navy
1000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-1000

Admiral Gary Roughead, USN
Chief of Naval Operations
2000 Navy Pentagon
Washington, DC 20350-2000

Dear Secretary Mabus and Admiral Roughead:

We are the Hampton Roads Military Affairs Commission, a newly formed group from Virginia's Hampton Roads area, one of the largest military areas in the world. Our more than 30 members are experts and leaders in their respective fields, including elected officials, retired military officers and business leaders. In today's fiscal environment, we recognize that you encounter difficult tradeoffs as you seek to balance competing priorities and ensure necessary funding for aircraft procurement, building and maintaining our naval fleet, military construction, and taking care of our sailors. Like you, we fully support the Navy's goal to build a fleet of no fewer than 313 ships.

We care deeply about national security and the future of our Navy. For this reason, we write today regarding the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) and its recommendation to construct facilities to support homeporting a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier (CVN) at Naval Station (NAVSTA) Mayport. We respectfully request that you provide us with a business-case analysis that objectively addresses the financial and operational tradeoffs of this proposal, as well as the threat assessment that warrants such an undertaking. We believe a more comprehensive public accounting is necessary before any change in East Coast homeporting is considered. We hope you will provide answers to our questions in the following areas:

Creating a CVN homeport at NAVSTA Mayport is estimated to cost between \$600 million and \$1 billion when all one-time and recurring annual costs are calculated. In the current economic climate and with today's high operating tempo, the Navy has numerous unfunded priorities. If the cost of homeporting is \$600 million to \$1 billion, what specific elements of current year and out-year projects will be decremented from the budget to provide the money?"

There is a pressing need for a more comprehensive strategic-risk assessment. The DoD has extensive capabilities to quantify risk and empirically evaluate the trade-offs and cost-benefit factors associated with any major investment. With respect to the proposed carrier homeport at NAVSTA Mayport, we have yet to learn of a strategic assessment or rigorous risk-based analysis that would identify the specific reasons for executing what is potentially a \$1 billion decision. To date, in seeking to justify this

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project, the Navy has said that the risk that a catastrophic event could close Hampton Roads is “low.”

The phrase “strategic dispersal” has been used by many as an intuitive argument to justify the creation of an additional East Coast homeport for a CVN. However, we are concerned this argument also creates a slippery slope akin to a “reverse BRAC”. Under Secretary for Policy Michelle Flournoy, testifying before the House Armed Services Committee, recently said that the logic of strategic dispersal also applies to other singularly based assets and infrastructure, to include fleet ballistic missile submarines. The immense cost and time of carrying out this additional dispersal would be extraordinary. What specific guidance has the Navy received, if any, to provide for strategic dispersal of any high value assets and infrastructure (carriers, subs, facilities)? Would this dispersal philosophy apply to other critical infrastructure such as the Pentagon or the U.S. Capitol?

Even with one less CVN, NAVSTA Norfolk would remain the world’s largest Naval Station and should be protected as such. Hundreds of millions of dollars have already been spent since 9/11 to improve port and base security in the Hampton Roads region. What security improvements are required in Mayport to accommodate a CVN and at what cost? Secondly, the Navy has cited the concern over possible blockage (either by natural or manmade causes) of the Norfolk channel. If harbor blockage of current CVN ports is considered a risk, are there any plans to mitigate the risk?

Significant increases in personnel, both military and federal employees, will be required to accommodate a new CVN homeport. Have the corresponding billets been identified for funding? What is the manning increase required for 2013 and 2014 when the CVN is scheduled to be home ported at Mayport? What is the overall manning plan for the CVN move? Specifically, is there a plan detailing the station manning and the requirement for temporary additional duty (TAD) sailors? What is this recurring cost? What is the impact of such temporary assignments on the ability to support remaining CVN activities at Norfolk and what will the quality of life impact be on sailors and shipyard workers who will be away from home for additional periods of time if a CVN is homeported at NAVSTA Mayport?

When the USS *Kennedy* (CV 67) left NAVSTA Mayport in 2007, much of the existing carrier-support infrastructure was decommissioned. If creating a new CVN homeport is of strategic importance, as some have indicated, why would the Navy decommission existing support infrastructure at Mayport only to rebuild much of it a few years later? What specific capabilities must be re-established and at what cost?

Precisely what CVN maintenance will be supported at NAVSTA Mayport after all facilities have been constructed? How often and for how long will the Navy need to return the CVN to Norfolk for maintenance availabilities that are beyond the capability of fly-away teams?

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The Navy's Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) proposes building nuclear propulsion repair facilities, but there is no mention of conventional requirements such as catapult and arresting gear maintenance. What conventional maintenance will be done by the maintenance personnel at NAVSTA Mayport?

While the FEIS addressed possible local economic impacts at Mayport, why did the FEIS neglect a corresponding socio-economic evaluation of Norfolk? With the decommissioning of USS *Enterprise* (CVN 65) and a follow-on change in homeport for another Norfolk-based carrier to Mayport, why didn't the FEIS evaluate the negative impact on Norfolk's local housing market, schools, jobs, and small businesses?

Thank you for taking the time to look into these queries. We commend you for your leadership. As this process evolves, we look forward to developing a better dialogue to ensure the concerns and issues we have identified are addressed in a timely, responsive way.

The Commission's point of contact is John Panneton, Military Liaison for Congressman Glenn Nye, who can be reached at 757-326-6201, or 4772 Euclid Road, Suite E, Virginia Beach, VA 23462.

Sincerely,

Congressman Glenn Nye
Senator Jim Webb
Senator Mark Warner
Congressman Randy Forbes
Congressman Bobby Scott
Congressman Rob Wittman
Congressman Owen Pickett, Former Member of Congress
Governor Robert McDonnell, Governor of Virginia
Senator Frank Wagner
Senator Ralph Northam
Delegate Matthew James
Delegate Paula Miller
Will Sessoms, Mayor of Virginia Beach, VA
Paul Fraim, Mayor of Norfolk, VA
Molly Ward, Mayor of Hampton, VA
Joe Franks, Mayor of Newport News, VA
Vice Admiral Joe Donnell, USN Ret.
Rear Admiral Fred Metz, USN Ret.
Rear Admiral Phil Olson, USN Ret.
Captain Roger Whiteway, USN Ret.
Major General Jon Gallinetti, USMC Ret.
Rear Admiral Tom Steffens, USN Ret.

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Vice Admiral Dick Dunleavy, USN Ret., Chairman, Military Economic Development Advisory Committee (MEDAC)

Read Admiral Ray Taylor USN Ret., President, Future Hampton Roads

Frank Roberts, Executive Director, Hampton Roads Military and Federal Facilities Alliance (HRMFAA)

Cam Ingram, President, Hampton Roads Navy League

Gary Cox and Mike Barrett, Virginia Beach VISIONS

Mark Mansfield, Chief, Planning & Policy, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Dana Dickens, President & CEO of the Hampton Roads Partnership

Dr. L.B. McCluney, Academic Dean, Joint Forces Staff College National Defense University

Ira Agricola, Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce

Barry Bishop, Executive Vice President Greater Norfolk Corporation

Luke Hiller, CEO, ADS Tactical

Cc: Robert Gates, Secretary of Defense

Cc: Admiral John Harvey, Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command